

Remarks

Claims 14-21 and 25 are pending in this application. Claims 1-13 and 22-24 were previously cancelled.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to specify the speed of the outer cover during the non-contact second printing operation. Support can be found in the specification at page 11, lines 24-30.

New dependent claim 25 has been added to specify that the second graphic has two or more colors. Support for new claim 25 can be found in the specification at page 18, lines 8-11.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.111, reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested. The shortened statutory period for replying to the present Office Action ends on July 28, 2010. This Response is therefore timely filed on July 27, 2010.

As set forth in the specification in the paragraph bridging pages 1 and 2, Applicants have determined that when printing graphics on the outer cover of absorbent articles at speeds over 100 feet per minute, non-contact printing methods do not perform well unless properly controlled and limited to relatively small areas. As such, Applicants have overcome these problems by combining contact printing and non-contact printing in a particular manner to provide absorbent articles with desirable graphic images. More specifically, as claimed, Applicants use contact printing to provide a first graphic on a first substrate prior to laminating the first substrate to a second substrate to form an outer cover. The first graphic spans at least 60% of the width of the outer cover. A second graphic is applied within the center third of the outer cover, at speeds over 100 feet per minute, using non-contacting printing. The resulting outer cover is joined with an absorbent and a liner to produce an absorbent article. While the various printing methods are known, the teachings of the prior art does not suggest using them in the manner claimed by Applicants.

Turning to the specific grounds of rejection, claims 14-17 and 21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent Publication No. 2000-000266 to Masaru (hereinafter "Masaru") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,129,264 to Travers et al. (hereinafter "Travers"), U.S. Publication No. 2004/0231539 to Clinton (hereinafter "Clinton") or U.S. Patent No. 6,343,550 to Feesler (hereinafter "Feesler"), U.S. Patent No. 5,503,076 to Yeo (hereinafter "Yeo"), U.S. Patent No. 6,732,778 to Machida et al. (hereinafter "Machida") and U.S. Patent No. 6,297,424 to Olson et al. (hereinafter "Olson"). It is asserted that it would be obvious to use contact printing followed by non-contact printing in the method of Masaru because Travers teaches that variable graphics are more easily changed using non-contact printing, so the use of contact printing can print non-variable graphics while downstream non-contact printing can print variable graphics depending on the product being made, while Clinton and Feesler teach that flexographic printing has advantages over other printing methods. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The primary reference, Masaru, discloses printing a graphic image on the outer cover of an absorbent article using ink jet printing, which is a non-contact printing method. While the computer translation of Masaru is a bit difficult to understand, Masaru appears to teach that ink jet printing is superior to other types of printing. As such, Masaru uses ink jet printing exclusively (see paragraphs 14-16), which effectively teaches away from Applicants' claimed method, which uses a combination of contact and non-contact printing. Therefore, to combine the teachings of Masaru with Travers as set forth in the rejection is inconsistent with the teachings of Masaru and amounts to the use of impermissible hindsight based on the teachings of Applicants' specification, since Masaru teaches that ink jet printing is superior to other types of printing. Following the teachings of Masaru, one of ordinary skill in the art of making absorbent articles would simply use ink jet printing for all graphics.

While Travers teaches a combination of flexographic printing (contact printing) with ink jet printing (non-contact printing) for making multiple envelope assemblies (not absorbent articles), there is no suggestion that the contact printed graphic span is at least 60% of the width of the substrate while the non-contact printed graphic is positioned within the center third of the width of the substrate as claimed by Applicants. In fact, setting aside the fact that Travers is not concerned with absorbent articles, the ink jet printed matter of Travers is placed well outside the center third of the substrate. For example, see Figure 1, first envelope 11, "NAME XXX", which is at the top edge of the envelope. Also see Figure 2 "DEAR NAME XXX" and "NAME XXX", both of which are at the top edges of their respective substrates. It is clear that the combined teachings of Travers and

Masaru do not appreciate the problem that Applicants have overcome, namely the limited use of non-contact printing on absorbent articles at high speeds (100 feet per second or greater). As such, the teachings of these references do not suggest the solution to the problem as claimed.

Moreover, Travers does not teach or suggest that the ink jet printing contains two or more colors as set forth in new dependent claim 25. Instead, Travers conspicuously mentions multiple colors only in connection with the flexographic printing step, but never in connection with the ink jet printing step. (See column 3, lines 12-14, for example). Given the application (envelopes), it seems likely that the nature of the variable information (names) is only printed in black, or at most one color. It would not be obvious from the teachings of Travers to provide variable graphics in multiple colors as claimed by Applicants, at least in part due to the entirely different printing application to which Travers is directed.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that this rejection of claims 14-17 and 21 has been overcome. The teachings of the various secondary references do not remedy the fundamental shortcomings of the teachings of Masaru and Travers as discussed above. Applicants therefore respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 18-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Masaru in view of Travers, Clinton or Feesler, U.S. Publication No. 2005/0149389 to Odorzynski (hereinafter "Odorzynski") and U.S. Patent No. 6,307,119 to Cammarota et al. (hereinafter "Cammarota"). It is asserted that it would have been obvious to use contact printing followed by non-contact printing in the method of Masaru because Travers teaches that variable graphics are more easily changed using non-contact printing, so the use of contact printing can print non-variable graphics while downstream non-contact printing can print variable graphics, and Clinton and Feesler teach that flexographics has advantages over other printing methods.

However, this basis for rejection is respectfully traversed for the same reasons discussed above. In particular, the combination of contact printing with non-contact printing taught by Travers is not properly combinable with the teachings of Masaru, since Masaru teaches that ink jet printing is advantageous over other types of printing when providing graphics on the outer cover of absorbent products. As above, the teachings of the other cited references do not overcome this fundamental shortcoming of the two main references. It is therefore believed that this rejection is not proper.

For the reasons stated above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently presented claims are in form for allowance and, thus, Applicants respectfully request such allowance.

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Response dated July 27, 2010
Reply to Office Action of April 28, 2010

Applicants intend to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action. If the Examiner detects any issue which the Examiner believes Applicants have not addressed in this Response, Applicants' undersigned attorney respectfully requests a telephone interview with the Examiner.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any prosecutorial fees (or credit any overpayment) associated with this communication to Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc. deposit account number 11-0875. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 not accounted for above, such extension is requested and should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

The undersigned may be reached at: (920) 721-8863 .

Respectfully submitted,

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Electronic Filing Certificate

I hereby certify that this correspondence and all attachments and any fee(s) are being electronically transmitted via the internet to the United States Patent and Trademark Office using the Electronic Filing System (EFS-Web) on July 27, 2010.

/Judith M Anderson/

Judith M. Anderson